

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method for delivering one or more goods or services through a variable value medium, comprising:

5        assigning one or more goods or services to the medium;

      assigning variable values to the medium such that the value of the medium varies in  
                  accordance with selected conditions or criteria;

      issuing the medium to a holder; and

      wherein the holder presents the variable value medium for redemption of one or more  
                  goods or services associated with the medium.

2. The method of claim 1 including assigning a unique identifier to the medium.

3. The method of claim 2 wherein the unique identifier identifies, directly or indirectly, the good  
      or service associated with the medium.

4.        The method of claim 3 wherein information related to the medium and the goods or  
                  services associated with the medium are recorded in a database and wherein the goods or  
                  services associated with the medium is discernable from the information in the database.

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5.        The method of claim 1 including varying the value of the medium according to one or  
                  more factors taken from the group including time, geographical location, and user activity.

6. The method of claim 1 including issuing the medium in an inactive state and requiring that the medium be activated in order to validate the medium.

7. The method of claim 6 including varying the value of the medium as a function of the 5 manner in which the medium is activated.

8. The method of claim 7 including varying the value of the medium based on one or more factors taken from the group including activation by telephone, activation via a global network, activation by completing a business reply inquiry, activation through a referral, or activation through a magnetic card reader.

9. The method of claim 1 including assigning the variable value medium to one or more assignees.

10. The method of claim 9 including communicating the assignment to a database and recording information in the database relative to the assignment including the identity of the assignee and the medium or media that form the subject of the assignment.

11. The method of claim 10 including issuing the medium in an inactive state and requiring 20 activation of the medium prior to the medium being used to obtain a good or service; and wherein activation entails the communication of information about the holder of the medium that is eventually recorded in the database.

12. The method of claim 11 wherein information pertaining to goods or services acquired through use of the variable value medium is communicated to and recorded in the database.

13. The method of claim 1 including issuing the medium in an inactive state, activating the  
5 medium, and deactivating the media upon the occurrence of one or more conditions.

14. The method of claim 13 wherein the medium may be reactivated after being deactivated.

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15. A method of promoting goods and services, comprising:

issuing media in which each medium has at least one good or service associated therewith;

identifying each medium with an identifier and recording the identifier in a database such that the at least one good or service associated with each medium can be determined;

5 assigning an inactive status to the media such that while assuming the inactive status the goods or services associated with the medium may not be redeemed;

recording the inactive status in a database;

activating at least some of the media by changing the status of the media from an inactive state to an active state and recording the change of the status in the database;

varying the value of at least some of the media such that the value of the media varies according to selected conditions; and

distributing the media to holders wherein the holders present the media to providers that deliver the goods or services associated with the presented media to the holders.

20 16. The method of claim 15 including varying the value of the media based on the manner of activation, the location of the provider, or the identity of the holder or provider.

17. The method of claim 15 wherein the database is consulted at various times to determine 20 whether the media or a certain medium is active or inactive.

18. The method of claim 15 wherein the database is updated from time to time with respect to the status of a medium and the value associated with the medium.

19. The method of claim 18 including the provider communicatively linking to the database  
and determining whether a presented medium is active or inactive, and further communicating  
for recordation in the database any goods or services delivered to a holder as a result of the  
5 medium being presented to the provider.

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10 20. A method of delivering one or more goods or services via a medium, comprising:  
15 identifying one or more goods or services that may be received by the holder of a  
20 medium in response to the medium being presented to a provider of the identified  
25 goods or services;  
5 issuing the medium in an inactive state;  
assigning the medium to one or more assignees and communicating information relative  
to the assignments to a database and recording in the database the identity of the  
assignees and the identity of goods and/or services identified by the medium  
assigned;  
transferring the assigned medium to an individual or entity (holder);  
activating the medium by communicating information relating to the medium that is  
ultimately recorded in the database;  
presenting the medium to a provider of goods or services associated with the medium  
where the provider delivers at least one good or service associated with the medium  
to the holder presenting the medium; and  
communicating with the database and recording information in the database as to the  
identity of the goods or services provided.

20 21. The method of claim 20 wherein the assignment may entail a single medium unit or a  
25 group of media units.

20 22. The method of claim 20 wherein the activation of the medium is fixed.

23. The method of claim 20 wherein activation is fixed by time, user activity or geography.

24. The method of claim 23 wherein activation is fixed by one of the following user activities: call to a certain telephone number, a log-in to a global network; responding by mail or carrier, a transaction with a provider; or by a referral.

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25. The method of claim 20 wherein the issued medium has a variable value.

26. The method of claim 25 wherein the value of the medium is a function of time, user activity, or geography.

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27. The method of claim 26 wherein the value of the medium varies with the manner of activation.

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28. The method of claim 27 wherein the value of the medium is established at one value when activation is made via telephone, a second value when activation is made via the global network, or a third value when activation is made by responding via mail or other carrier.

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29. The method of claim 25 wherein the value of the medium is a function of the transaction entered into between the holder and the provider.

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30. The method of claim 25 wherein the value of the medium is a function of the identity of the assignee.

31. The method of claim 25 wherein the value of the medium is a function of a referral.

32. The method of claim 20 including converting the medium from an active state to an  
5 inactive state.

33. The method of claim 20 including reactivating the medium after the medium has proceeded through inactive, active, and inactive states.

10 34. The method of claim 20 wherein after activation, the medium becomes inactive upon the occurrence of at least one condition.

15 35. The method of claim 34 wherein after activation, the medium becomes inactive upon use of the medium.

20 36. The method of claim 20 wherein the medium is capable of variable in activations.

37. The method of claim 36 wherein the medium assumes an inactive state based on one or more business rules.

38. The method of claim 37 wherein the medium, after being activated, assumes an inactive state based on time, failure to use the medium, failure to respond to a certain communication, or based on geography.

39. The method of claim 36 wherein after activation and inactivation, the medium includes a fixed reactivation capability.

5 40. The method of claim 39 wherein the medium may be reactivated based on one of the following parameters: time, user activity, or geography.

10 41. The method of claim 40 wherein reactivation can take place by only one of the following activities by the user: the user calling a selected telephone number, the user logging in to a selected address on a global network, or the user providing information by responding to an inquiry by mail or other carrier.

15 42. The method of claim 40 wherein reactivation is achieved either by a transaction between the holder and a provider or by a referral.

43. The method of claim 32 wherein the medium includes a variable reactivation capability.

20 44. The method of claim 43 wherein the medium may be reactivated based on time, user activity or geography.

45. The method of claim 44 wherein the medium is reactivated by any one of the following activities by the user: the user calling a selected telephone number, the user logging into a certain address on a global network, or the user responding to an inquiry by mail or carrier.

46. The method of claim 44 wherein reactivation of the medium is achieved by the holder and provider entering into a transaction or by a referral.

5 47. The method of claim 20 wherein activating the medium includes communicating information to the database relative to the holder of the media or to a person or entity associated with the media.

48. A method of providing goods and services to an individual via a medium, comprising:  
10 associating one or more goods or services with the medium such that under certain circumstances the medium may be presented by a holder to a provider and the provider will redeem media by delivering one or more of the associated goods or services to the holder;  
15 assigning an identifier to the medium;  
recording information in a database relative to the medium and linking the one or more goods or services associated with the medium with the identifier of the medium;  
distributing the medium to an individual;  
20 the individual receiving the medium, presenting the medium to a provider of the one or more goods or services associated with the medium;  
delivering one or more of the goods or services associated with the medium to the individual upon presentment; and  
communicating to the database the results of the transaction between the individual and provider such that the database reflects that the medium has been presented to the

provider and the identity of a good or service that has been delivered in response to presentment.

49. The method of claim 48 including initially issuing the medium in an inactive state and  
5 requiring that the medium to be activated as a condition for any good or service to be redeemed when the medium is presented.

50. A method of promoting goods or services, comprising:

provisioning a database by:

- (a) assigning a unique identifier to a medium wherein the medium forms a part of a media;
- (b) associating a good or service with each medium;
- (c) linking the good or service associated with each medium with the unique identifier of that medium.

distributing the media to individuals that enable the individuals to present the media to providers of goods or services who under certain circumstances will redeem the presented media by delivering to the individuals one or more goods or services associated with the media;

20 activating the media by changing the status of the media from an inactive state to an active state and recording that status change in a database;

the individuals receiving the media, presenting the media to providers of goods or services associated with the media;

determining the status of the media presented by communicating with the database;

delivering one or more goods or services associated with the media to individuals presenting an active medium; and

the providers communicating with the database to indicate that one or more goods or services associated with particular media has been delivered to individuals presenting certain media to the providers, and wherein the database is updated to reflect the transfer of one or more goods or services from the providers such that the database will generally reflect media that has been presented to providers and the goods or services delivered by the providers in response to the presentment of the media.

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5 51. The method of claim 50 wherein before the providers deliver goods or services to individuals presenting media, the provider verifies that one or more conditions have been met.

10 52. The method of claim 50 wherein after goods or services are delivered relative to certain media, the media subject to the delivery of goods or services is then converted from an active state to an inactive state.

15 53. The method of claim 50 wherein after goods or services are delivered relative to certain media, a query is generated seeking to determine whether the subject media should be converted from an active status to an inactive status and based on selected conditions the status of the subject media is converted to an inactive status or remains unchanged.

20 54. The method of claim 50 wherein the database is provisioned with certain criteria that establishes variable value for the media.

55. The method of claim 54 wherein the value of the media is a function of the manner in which the media is activated, the location of the provider, the identity of the provider, or the identity of the individuals presenting the media.

5 56. A method of dispensing and tracking pharmaceutical trial products, comprising:

- a. assigning an identifier to a medium;
- b. associating a pharmaceutical product with the medium such that information carried by the medium identifies the associated pharmaceutical product;
- c. recording in a database the identifier of the medium and sufficient information to identify the pharmaceutical product associated with the medium;
- d. dispensing the medium to an individual;
- e. presenting the medium to a provider of the pharmaceutical product associated with the medium;
- f. in response to presenting the medium, the provider delivering the pharmaceutical product associated with the medium; and
- g. communicating to the database the transaction involving the delivery of the pharmaceutical product by the provider such that the database identifies the medium presented and the pharmaceutical product delivered by the provider as a result of the medium being presented.

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57. The method of claim 56 wherein after dispensing the medium to an individual, the same individual presents the medium to the provider.

58. The method of claim 56 including distributing the medium to a medical prescriber who dispenses the medium to the individual.

59. The method of claim 58 including the medical prescriber issuing a prescription for the 5 pharmaceutical product associated with the medium dispersed to the individual.

60. The method of claim 58 including distributing the medium to the medical prescriber in an inactive state and activating the medium prior to the medium being dispensed to the individual.

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61. The method of claim 56 wherein assigning a unique identifier to the medium and associating a pharmaceutical product with the medium is provided by provisioning the database, and wherein provisioning the database further includes linking the pharmaceutical product associated with the medium with the unique identifier of that medium.

62. The method of claim 61 wherein the medium forms a part of a group of media wherein each medium of the group of media includes a unique identifier and has a pharmaceutical product associated therewith, and wherein the media is initially issued in an inactive state and requires activation before pharmaceutical products can be delivered as a consequence of presentment.

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63. The method of claim 58 wherein after the delivery of a pharmaceutical product, the database reflects the identity of the medical prescriber for the delivered pharmaceutical product and the provider that actually delivered the pharmaceutical product.